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More Extreme Cold Weather for Milwaukee Area

City of Milwaukee Health Department reminds community to take precautions during cold snap to avoid injury

The National Weather Service (NWS) has issued a Winter Storm Warning with blizzard-like conditions possible beginning this afternoon and continuing to midnight. The NWS has also issued a Wind Chill Advisory for the Milwaukee area starting this afternoon and continuing to noon on Wednesday. Temperatures are expected to plummet to 0 degrees and below with strong wind gusts and wind chills of 20 to 30 degrees below zero.

If precautions are not taken, bitterly cold temperatures coupled with strong winds could result in severe frostbite and hypothermia. Hypothermia occurs when the body loses heat faster than it can produce it and resulting in abnormally low body temperature, a potentially life-threatening condition. Frostbite occurs when unprotected skin is exposed to very cold temperatures and freezes. Frostbite may cause the affected area to appear white or grayish yellow and feel unusually firm or waxy. Both hypothermia and frostbite are conditions that require immediate medical treatment. A body temperature below 95° F is a medical emergency and can lead to death if not treated promptly.

It is important to note that people who are involved in outdoor cold weather activities such as ice fishing, snowmobiling or skiing should always be aware of weather conditions and be properly dressed to protect themselves from prolonged outdoor exposure.

In addition, the very young and the elderly are more susceptible to extreme cold so it is important to check in on elderly neighbors, ensure young children are dressed properly before going outside. Please remember that pets need extra care when temperatures fall.

Other cold weather safety tips:

- If you are going to be outside, let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return.
- Make a car survival kit including blankets, sleeping bags, extra clothing and high-energy foods.
- Be sure your vehicle's fuel tank is at least half-full and the battery is charged.
- Do not touch metal surfaces with uncovered hands flesh can freeze instantly to the surface
- Do not drink alcohol before participating in an outdoor activity. Alcohol can reduce your brain's ability to recognize your body's warning signs when it becomes too cold.
- Layer clothing and use hats and ski masks to cover nose and ears when going outdoors.

For more information visit the City of Milwaukee Health Department website at www.milwaukee.gov/health